

GUIDE

TO

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

VOL. I.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

MR. EDITOR :—There are but few, if any at the present day, who will attempt to deny that the Bible abounds with commands, addressed to the people of God, to be holy ; also with the most encouraging promises to all, who seek full conformity to Him through the mediation of Christ. If the Bible teaches any one thing more clearly than another, it surely is the duty and privilege of all that embrace the Saviour to be saved from all sin, both of heart and life ; from all its condemning, controlling, and polluting power ; to be brought into that state where they can love God with all the heart, and their neighbor as themselves. If this is not the duty and privilege of the children of God, what, I ask, can be the meaning of the following passages, as well as a multitude of others that might be quoted ? “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” “It is the will of God even your sanctification.” “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit ; perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.” “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, and with *all thy soul*, and with *all thy mind*.” “The very God of peace sanctify you *wholly* ; and I pray God your *whole spirit*, and *soul*, and *body*, be preserved *blameless* unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be *clean* from *all* your *filthiness* ; and from *all* your *idols* will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” “If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the *blood* of Jesus Christ his Son *cleanseth us from all sin*.” “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse* us from *all unrighteousness*.” But notwithstanding the Bible, which all Christians profess to receive as the rule, and all-sufficient rule, both of their faith

and practice, is full of such commands, and exceeding great and precious promises; it is a humiliating fact, that there are comparatively few of the members of the church of Christ, living in the enjoyment of that perfect love which has been made their privilege by the shedding of the precious blood of Christ; and their duty by the command of Him who cannot look upon sin in any of his creatures with the least degree of allowance.

Most professing Christians, seem to be content with small attainments—with being mere babes in Christ, when they should have arrived to the stature of perfect men—with but little knowledge of the love of Christ, when they should be “filled with all the fullness of God.” O! what cause there is for deep humiliation on the part of the church in view of her high and holy calling and her actual condition. How far below the standard raised in the word of God; how weak to what she should be; how slow her movements for the salvation of the world, to what they might, and ought to be; if the church as a body was holy, if perfect love reigned in the hearts of all her members, “how would one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.” She would be “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible to her enemies as an army with banners.” But, why does not the church come up to the standard of purity and enjoyment raised by Christ and his apostles? It cannot be for the want of light in relation to her duty. The true light is come: it shines forth from every page of the revelation of God; and if the true light has not reached every mind in Christendom, it is because there has been a culpable neglect on the part of that mind to search the Scriptures.

We have no reason to believe that a want of light is the cause; but a want of that deep sense of their obligations to be holy, which **MUST** precede the sanctification of the people of God. A knowledge of duty is certainly important, therefore the Bible should be carefully and prayerfully read, that the understanding may be sufficiently enlightened, and a perfect knowledge of the will of our heavenly Father be acquired. But there is such a thing as knowing duty, and at the same time feeling its importance sufficiently to lead to its performance. The unconverted sinner may know, (and probably does) that it is his duty to repent, and seek God with all his heart; yet he will not until he feel his obligation to do so. Many are to-day living impenitent, exposed to the wrath of God, who, if interrogated upon the subject, would acknowledge that it was their duty to exercise repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ; that they *must* do it, in order to be saved. Yet they do not repent, they do not believe in Christ with the heart unto righteousness, and are not severed from sin and danger. The truth must be pressed home upon such hearts, until they feel the power of acknowledged truth; then they will fly to Christ for refuge, and not before.

This is equally true of those who have experienced the blessing of pardon, in relation to the blessing of holiness or sanctification. So strong is the power of sin, so soon do some of the remaining roots of bitterness spring up in the heart of the justified soul, that most if not all the children of God have detected in themselves a disposition to rest in present attainment, to be satisfied with a partial salvation.—Now unless this disposition is overcome, the individual in whom it is found will certainly backslide from the Lord, fall into darkness, and condemnation.

A conviction of the necessity of holiness, of our individual obligation to possess it in an eminent degree, even all the mind that was in Christ, is indispensable to overcome the disposition to rest in a partial salvation; to our advancement in the divine life, and that perfection of Christian character to which Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Paul, and many others have attained, and is equally the privilege of all who seek for full redemption in the blood of Christ.

Here arises an important question, How can that conviction which is so important, and indeed indispensable to the attainment of this blessing, be obtained?

It is undoubtedly the work of the Holy Spirit to produce it, by his powerful, yet silent operation upon the heart. But while we admit this conviction for holiness to be peculiarly the work of the Spirit, the gift of God, we believe that means are to be used to secure it to ourselves. All our blessings are the gift of God; the blessing of pardon is emphatically so,—and yet means are to be used to obtain it. We tell the unconverted sinner, who says he does not feel the need of salvation, he must pray, consider on his ways, and search the Scriptures, if he would feel that deep, evangelical conviction that is necessary to lead him to Christ for justification. There are means to be used by us, my brethren in the Lord, if we would obtain that deep feeling in relation to the purification of our hearts from all sin, without which we shall never be made free from the law of sin and death. We have no right to expect the work to be wrought by the Spirit, until we are engaged in the use of those means through which the Spirit ordinarily acts upon the heart; for while we remain inactive, we give fearful evidence that we have but little, if any, desire to be led into *all* truth.

I will here present some of the means to be used. Prayer is the most important, because without it all other means will be unavailing. "Ask, and ye shall receive." Do we then need an increased conviction for a present, a full salvation? Then let us cry,

"Deepen the wound thy hands have made
In this weak, helpless soul;
Till mercy, with its balmy aid,
Descend to make me whole."

The promise of being filled with righteousness, is to those that hunger and thirst for it, and those only. Do we not err in praying for the blessing of perfect love, when we do not feel its importance to that extent to make us importunate at the throne of grace? Should not our prayer rather be, "Convince me of my need?" Constant watchfulness should accompany our prayers. It is often the case, that in our closets, the class, or social prayer meetings, our minds are awakened to, and our hearts impressed with, the importance of holiness, and we resolve to seek until we find the pearl of great price. But we go out from the means of grace, mix with the world, lay down our watch; and our good desires, feelings and purposes, are like the morning cloud and the early dew,—they depart from us. How important, then, the direction of our Saviour, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, *Watch.*" Let us think, and reflect, that God designs that his people should be "the light of the world;" "the salt of the earth;" and that they are only so in proportion as they are holy. Let us reflect that possibly the salvation of some immortal spirit depends, under God, upon our being made holy. It is our duty to be living epistles of the purity and power of the gospel of Christ; to shed a hallowing influence on all around us; to be instruments of the salvation of our fellow beings. Therefore, if we would answer the great end of life; if we love our fellow sinners, and wish to glorify God in our bodies, and spirits, which are his, let us seek for full conformity to him, through the blood of the cross. Let us reflect upon what it has cost the Son of God to put this blessing within our reach. Think of his deep humiliation; how he who was rich, became poor. Let us dwell in our minds upon his agony in the garden; the cruel mockings and scourgings he endured. O! let us turn our eyes to Calvary; behold him as he expires there; hear him cry, "It is finished!" as he gives up the ghost. And why all this humiliation, suffering and death? Why does spotless innocence groan, and weep, and bleed? Why does the only begotten of the Father—the brightness of his glory—the express image of his person—endure such ignominy as this? The answer is, That he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; that our hearts might be made the habitation of God through the Spirit, that he might present his people before the throne, without spot, and blameless. If we would feel right in reference to the subject of holiness, and realize its importance, we should remember that God has made holiness a necessary qualification for heaven. Nothing that is impure can enter there. "Without holiness no man can see the Lord." This declaration of the Most High as effectually bars the gate of the New Jerusalem against all whose robes are not washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, as the cherubim and the flaming sword guarded

the way to the tree of life against fallen Adam, after his expulsion from Eden. If we would go to heaven, we must be holy.

Let us give ourselves to prayer, my brethren and sisters in the Lord,—meditate upon these things, and seek for holiness of heart, until we are made pure, and prepared to adopt the language of the poet,—

“Our souls and bodies we resign;
With joy we render thee
Our all,—no longer ours, but thine
To all eternity.”

ALPHA.

Lynn, September, 1839.

*Brief extracts from the Journal of Miss HANNAH SYNG BUNTING,
who departed this life in Philadelphia, May, 1832.*

(CONTINUED.)

May 13, 1825. Had a clearer view of God's fulness, and my own emptiness, at Mr. Paradise's class this afternoon.

May 14. At Mr. Waldo's meeting this evening;—not altogether pleased with him. I fear a wrong spirit has crept in among some of this people. They speak too lightly of the ministry. Lord save them from delusion and apostasy.*

May 15. Sabbath.—Rose this morning at four o'clock, to attend a meeting held in the form of a love-feast, at a class room in Forsyth street. I never heard so many witnesses, and such noble testimonies for perfect love. I exult to find this doctrine so fully believed by my brethren and sisters in New York. God grant a general inquiry may be made for it throughout the world of professing Christians. I am cheered to find several of my Presbyterian friends living in the enjoyment of it. Sat with great delight to-day, and heard Mr. Chase, Mr. Sandford, and Mr. Nichols preach the word of life. I view before me an ocean of love, which has neither bottom nor shore.

Rahway, (N. J.) May 19. Came here yesterday;—spent most of this afternoon profitably conversing with my dear cousin D. on the deep things of God. Had a pleasant time in the evening at cousin Ashby's class, while listening to the simple, though clear and feeling

* This is a very judicious remark of Miss Bunting, and shows the soundness of her judgment, as well as the depth of her piety. It is pride and delusion which leads to contempt of the authorized ministers of Christ; and here apostasy generally has its origin. This the history of the Church abundantly confirms.

details of the dear people. I feel that my visit to New York has not been altogether in vain. I see nothing so desirable as holiness. I wish to be free from all else, that Christ may be all in all. I would not be found a moment from his side, as I am only safe while there. To get ready to die is my chief concern. O for a *fitness*, that when the summons is sent, I may say with joy, "Lord, I come!"

Crosswicks, May 22. Since I wrote last I have met with a severe trial, and am still laboring under it; yet, with the Psalmist, I can say, "Blessed be the Lord God, who daily crowneth and loadeth me with benefits." My mind is in a comfortable frame, and my prospects of eternal happiness are brightening. The country also looks charmingly since the reviving rain. Sweet are its smiles; and all seems peace. I am waked every morning by the warbling of the feathered songsters, who

"Praise their Maker all they can,
And shame the silent tongue of man."

I have enjoyed many solitary walks. Nature never appeared half so lovely! How I enjoy this relaxation! What a privilege to be far away from the busy haunts of men, with my mind calm, and free from the vexing cares of a city life! The stillness that surrounds me soothes my mind into a pleasing melancholy.

"I feel not now my bosom bleed,
Nor yet that *some things* o'er me press;
For O, *religion*! thou indeed
Art, *love*, and *peace*, and *happiness*."

Philadelphia, May 29. My heart is penetrated with the goodness and love of God, in bringing me in safety to my residence. He has defeated my expectations with regard to my health. I return much worse than I went. For several days I have raised blood in coughing. I trust in the God of my salvation, "for unto him belong the issues from death." Abundantly more do I enjoy the consolations and sufficiency of grace when at home, than when travelling, visiting, &c. I only live to know my adored *Father's will*, and glorify him by suffering as well as doing. I sometimes wonder why I feel such an intense desire to be employed, without either power of body or mind, or any qualification for the great *work*.

June 12. "A father of the fatherless is God in his holy habitation." Yes, he is with his orphan child, and enables her to bear pain as she never did before, and cheers her weary spirit with a lively hope of, ere long, being released from the shackles of mortality, and brought for ever to bask in the fruition of his boundless and eternal love.

June 21. I feel as a moth in the mighty hand of Him who rideth upon the heavens. He shows me my weakness, but leaves me not to contend with my foes *alone*. May I lose nothing in this furnace,

but the dross of nature. I long to be more conformed to Christ, to be enabled to follow the great Sufferer, and rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer with him, that finally I may, "free from pain, his glory sing."

June 30. Earthly vanities are not only tasteless, but irksome. My infirm constitution admonishes me not to expect long life. I would regard each day as a reprieve from death, and have my conversation and my heart in heaven. I have but one object in view, which is to honor God in my body and spirit, which are his, and only his. My good actions, if any I perform, are *very* imperfect; but as "mere indifference to good is evil," I would have every power and faculty occupied in the cause of my Divine Saviour.

July 1. Disappointment and pain make up the sum of my earthly portion; "but my feet stand in an even place." I trust in God, and am helped. O, for more simplicity, and to be filled with love to the Most High! I firmly believe Jesus is preparing a mansion for me in a land where I shall experience no change, except from one degree of glory into another. When shall I be released from every infirmity, that I may enjoy my God without interruption, in that region where tears shall be wiped from off all faces?

"O were I entered there,
To perfect heaven restored;
O were I *now* caught up to share
The triumph of my Lord!"

July 2. Our dear Summerfield has at length landed on the peaceful shores where the storms of trouble never beat. Long and keenly did he feel the chastening hand of the Almighty. Yes, one of the most glorious *lights* God hath bestowed upon his Church, is *gone*! cut down in the flower of his age, by the relentless hand of *death*! I am led to adore this mysterious providence, and must acknowledge, "Though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet justice and truth are the habitation of his throne." But who now shall strengthen our hands in this weary land of shadows? But I am silenced by the voice of Him who says, "Shall I not do what I will with my *own*?" Summerfield did not sleep as others do. Divine love and benevolence for his wretched fellow creatures burned upon the altar of his devout heart. I never knew one possessed of equal qualifications to advance the cause of God. He did honor to it by his abundant labors. May his mantle fall on our young Elishas!

I would bring a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God that I am still alive in a dying world. I wish so to order my life, that I may *se* with one, "I am ready to die, but willing to live." Many, this excessively warm weather, have had to obey a hasty *call*. A few d from our dwelling, the summons was sent to a man and his v one short week.

"O time,—than gold more precious."

Hilton, July 5. This day I have completed my twenty-fourth year. I am led to wonder at the mercies of God, which have followed me from my *cradle*. I expect they will continue with me to my *tomb*.

I realize that *time* with me is on the wing. Lord, enable me duly to prize and weigh *each* hour. I know "that life is long which answers life's *great end*."

Philadelphia, July 10. My heart is filled with sorrow, hearing the mournful news of my cousin Daniel's severe illness. Lord, support his dear sister on her hasty journey. From our early days Daniel and myself have been much united. There is but a few weeks' difference in our ages. We commenced the Christian course nearly together, and perfectly coincided in sentiment. Yes, he was "lovely in life," and I feel that if he is now to be torn away, that in "*death* we shall not be divided." Our friendship will only consummate in eternity.

I spent last week profitably at Hilton: am better in body since my return. God's *will* is blessed; and whether it be for or against me, I receive it all as from his hand. Owing to the weakness of my body, I cannot use as much self-denial as in time past. I pray that I may be saved from inactivity and needless self-indulgence. Lord, guide me, and let thy glory be my constant aim.

Three girls of my Sunday school class have been promoted as teachers. I have a godly jealousy over them, and desire they should feel their awful responsibility. I begin to hope the labor of six years will not be altogether in vain.

July 12. I more fully realize that time is receding, and eternity is heaving in *view*. My beloved cousin, Daniel Ellis, on Sunday last, (July 10,) at four o'clock, exchanged a state of suffering for a peaceful immortality. His dying moments were not those of ecstatic joy, but calm and serene as summer evenings are. Perhaps some, on viewing him cut down in the bloom of youth and usefulness, and snatched from the fond embrace of an amiable wife and lovely babe, may be inclined to say, "How sad!" But I adore the goodness of God in calling him so *early* to his glory. Daniel labored faithfully for that which endureth unto eternal life. God set him to work; and shall he not, when he pleases, *call* him away, and give him his hire? All his toils are now ended; he has bid adieu to this passing world, and is *now* enjoying the delights of heaven, seeing things that have never entered into the heart of man, and which in this life are impossible to be conceived. My soul exults in the prospect of soon joining him in the skies. I feel as a stranger in a weary land, restless, and sighing for a better inheritance.

July 21. Notwithstanding my unworthiness, God deigned to visit me in band to-night. One of my dear sisters has been for some weeks under a cloud. May it speedily burst in blessings on her head.

I long for a life of entire devotion to God, and to be constantly employed in his service. I dare not stop to play with bubbles, while souls, bought with the *price* of a Redeemer's blood, are perishing. True, my sphere of usefulness is very limited; yet God will not despise the day of small things. If I cannot perform great achievements, yet I may be found often in secret places, wrestling for Zion's prosperity. I would press through summer's heat and winter's cold, knowing that when the world's short week of toil is o'er, my reward will be glorious. When I contemplate the felicities of heaven, I am ready to say,

"When shall I see my Father's face,
And in his bosom rest?"

July 24. I desire to be ever on the wing, and watch, saying, "Here am I, Lord; send me where thou wilt."—Rode twenty miles to-day, to Miss Pepper's Sabbath school. Verified the truth of this promise, "They that water, shall be watered." Rev. Joseph Pilmoor is lodged in the garner above. His memory failed on all points but the subject of religion. *This* he was ever alive to. Nearly all the veterans of Mr. Wesley's time have gone to meet him, doubtless in the Paradise of God.—This evening every feeling, every pulse of my heart, is *peace*.

July 13. I am not left to guess at the evidences of God's holy religion. The light of the Spirit will be imparted, not only as it respects justification, but sanctification.

Aug. 15. Let me lose sight of self and self-dependence, that Christ may be all in all. Much devolves upon me. I have no strength of my own. I lean upon Jesus, and am only mighty in *his* might.

Martha Boyl, instead of being in excruciating pain, is now enjoying the blissful realities of heaven! A short time before her dissolution, she started from a long silence, and said to her weeping friends, "I have not been with you. A view of heaven and glory has been revealed;" and then ceased speaking for ever. In love-feast, this evening, it seemed as if her spirit was near.

Aug. 20. Sweet communion my soul has this hour enjoyed with the Father of spirits. The calm of evening fits the mind for contemplation. How are the closing hours of each day calculated to warn me of the approach of the awful night of the grave! Yet I look forward with joy to the period when I shall quit this state of trial, and lay this feeble body in the narrow house of the dead, in the full and certain hope of a joyful resurrection. O, then, thrice welcome the shadows of the evening, and the darkness of the tomb, for they are but the way to the realms of eternal glory.

Aug. 21. How good is the Lord, after such a distressing drought, to bless the earth with nearly a week's rain.—I have been very much secluded, and had but little society of late; but God is with me in all

I do: no melancholy void is left in my days. "How oft I look to the heavenly hills," where I expect to meet with those I have loved and lost below. This morning being inclement, I was at a loss to know the path in which to walk: however, I ventured to the sanctuary, and my hungry soul was filled with good things. I believe Mr. Pease is sent of God among us. His discourse was from Acts ix. 31. I am striving to walk in the fear of the Lord. I possess much comfort in the Holy Ghost:—had access to the throne of grace, praying for the conversion of sinners.

Aug. 30. One year the Lord has had the *entire* possession of my heart. I strive to live each moment as seeing Him who is invisible. Jesus gladdens me daily with his love. I am relieved from all servile fear, and death is robbed of its terrors. I can shake hands with it, as with my friend. I have just returned from worshipping again in the pleasant woods of Gloucester. It was as last year, and much more abundant. Surely God was there.

(*To be continued.*)

SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATION OF THE SON OF GOD.

BY REV. JOHN FLETCHER.

LETTER III.

IV. Why the Lord manifests himself to the children of men, is an important question, which I now come to consider. It is not, we may easily think, for the gratification of their curiosity, but for purposes worthy of his wisdom; and what these are, we shall soon learn, if we reduce divine manifestations to three general classes, extraordinary, ordinary, and mixt ones; and then consider the design and use of each, as it may be collected from Scripture.

I. To begin with manifestations of the extraordinary kind: they are such as are either merely external, or vouchsafed to a few only on particular occasions, and are by no means essential to salvation.

1. Some of these are calculated to rouse the thoughtless into consideration. Of this kind was the manifestation some were favored with, a little before our Lord's passion: "As he prayed, there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified my name, and will glorify it again. The people that stood by and heard it, said it thundered!" They looked upon the extraordinary call as something common and natural. "Others said, An angel spake to him." But Jesus said, "This voice came not of me, but for your sakes."

2. Others are intended as a last warning to notorious sinners. Of

this nature was the terrifying sight Nebuchadnezzar had, in his second dream of "a Watcher and Holy One coming down from heaven, and crying aloud, Cut down the tree." And that of the mysterious hand, which wrote Belshazzar's doom on the wall, while he profaned the sacred vessels in his night revels.

3. Some are designed for the protection of God's people, and the destruction and humiliation of their proud enemies. As when the "Lord looked to the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and troubled their host:" when "he cast down great stones from heaven" upon the armies of the five kings, who fought against Israel: or when he manifested his presence in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace to quench the violence of the flame, preserve the three confessors, and convince the raging tyrant that God's kingdom ruleth over all.

4. The design of others is to encourage the children of God in dangerous enterprises, or direct them in important steps. Of this kind was that to Joshua, before he began the conquest of Canaan; and that to St. Paul, when the "Lord stood by him" in the prison, and informed him he must bear witness to him also at Rome.

5. Some are calculated to appoint some persons to uncommon services and trials, or to the prophetic and ministerial office: as to that in which Noah was commissioned to build the Ark, Abraham to offer up Isaac, Moses to deliver Israel, Nathan to reprove David, Balaam to bless Israel, and Jeremiah to preach to the Jews.

6. Others again are designed to answer providential ends for the deliverance of the people of God, as those of Gideon; or spiritual ends of reproof, instruction, and consolation to the Church throughout all ages, as most of the revelations vouchsafed to the prophets, and to St. John.

II. The manifestations essential either to the conversion of sinners, or edification of saints, and which the word of God and the experiences of Christians show to be common to all believers of the Church, are of the ordinary kind, and their use or design is,

1. To make the word "spirit and life, quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit," that the Gospel may not come to sinners, "in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

2. To ease an anguished conscience, and impart the peace of God to a troubled mind: as in the case of broken-hearted David, mourning Hezekiah, weeping Peter, and Paul agonizing in prayer.

3. To reveal Christ to us, and in us, so as to make us savingly believe, and "know in whom we have believed," according to the experiences of Peter, Lydia, Cornelius, and every living member of Christ.

4. To open a blessed intercourse and keep up a delightful communion with Christ; as appears from the experience of believers illustrated in the Canticles.

5. To silence the remains of self-righteousness, and deepen the humiliation of our souls, as in the case of Job. To make us "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. To bruise Satan under our feet," yea, to bruise the serpent's head in our hearts, and seal "the exceeding great and precious promises given to us, that we might be partakers of the divine nature," and continue "immovable, always abounding in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labor of love." In a word, to "strengthen us with might, by God's Spirit, in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and we may be filled with all the fulness of God."

6. To prepare us for great trials, support us under them, and comfort us after them. This was our Lord's experience before his temptation, after he had overcome the tempter, and when he was in the height of his agony. This was also the case of David, St. Paul, and of all the apostles, when they had been scourged for the name of Jesus; and it is still the case of all true and deep mourners in Zion.

7. And lastly, to make us "depart in peace," as Simeon; or die in perfect love with our enemies, and in the full triumph of faith, as St. Stephen. All who live and die in the Lord, partake, more or less, of these ordinary displays of his powerful presence; and I desire you, sir, to remember that it is *chiefly*, if not only, in support of these important manifestations, I take up the pen.

III. The third class of manifestations, is that of *mixt ones*: so called, because they are partly extraordinary, and partly ordinary. Some are ordinary in their design, and extraordinary in their circumstances. Of this sort was the manifestation to the Apostles, Acts iv. 31. The design of it was merely common, that is, to comfort them under contempt, and encourage them to do good and suffer evil; but the "shaking of the place where they were assembled," was an uncommon circumstance. The same thing may be said of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the one hundred and twenty who were assembled in the upper room on the day of pentecost; and, some time after, on Cornelius and his soldiers. That they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost and spiritual fire, was not extraordinary, since it is the common blessing which can alone make a man a Christian, or confirm him in the faith: but that the sound of a rushing wind should be heard, and luminous appearances seen resting upon them, that they should have been enabled to speak the wonderful works of God in other tongues, were uncommon circumstances attending their spiritual baptism.

Some manifestations are mixt, both as to their design and circumstances. That the iniquity of Isaiah should be put away, and St. Paul converted, were not uncommon things; they are the common effects of ordinary manifestations: but that the prophet should be commissioned to preach to the Jews, and the apostle to open the eyes

of the Gentiles, were extraordinary circumstances; as also a flying cherub appearing to the one, and a light brighter than the sun blinding the other.

IV. For want of distinguishing properly between what is ordinary and extraordinary, in mixt manifestations, persons who are not possessed of a clear head, or what is worse, of an honest heart, conclude, that none but enthusiasts speak now of divine manifestations. If they hear it affirmed, that they must be converted as well as St. Paul, they perty ask whether they are Jews, and whether they must be struck to the earth by a voice from heaven? They wilfully forget that our Lord spake to his hearers as sinful men, and not as bigoted Jews, when he said, "Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." They obstinately refuse to see that the circumstances of the apostle's falling to the ground, &c., were not essential to his conversion, and had no other use than to make his call more remarkable for the conversion of the Jews and comfort of the Christians. When the same prejudiced persons are told that they must be "born of the Spirit, and receive the Holy Ghost," as well as Cornelius and his servants, overlooking the ordinary baptism of the Spirit, they pitch upon the extraordinary circumstance of the gift of tongues, imparted for a season, to remove the prejudices of the Jews, and to draw the attention of the Gentiles; and think, with a sneer, and a charge of enthusiasm, to overturn the apostolic saying, "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Be not deceived, sir, by these persons. Acknowledge, that so sure as you want the regenerating knowledge of Christ, you want the manifestation of his Spirit, without which he can never be known savingly. To return:—

Though I contend only for the ordinary manifestations of Christ, I am far from supposing that all *extraordinary* or *mixt* manifestations have ceased. Such a concession would savor too much of the spirit of infidelity, which prevails in the Church. They are more frequent than many imagine. To instance, in one particular, how far I am from acquiescing in that infidel spirit:—I am so attached to that old book, the Bible, as to say of many, who pass for ministers of Christ, "Wo to the foolish prophets," that follow their own spirit, "and have seen nothing; that say, The Lord says, and the Lord hath not sent them." I think the desire of being styled reverend, and right reverend, and the prospect of a living or a mitre, are very improper motives for assuming the sacred character. And I am such an enthusiast as to believe our Church in the right for requiring that all her ministers should not only be called, but even *MOVED* by the Holy Ghost to take the office of ambassadors for Christ upon themselves. (*Ordination.*)

V. Having manifested the design and use of ordinary manifestations,

it may not be improper to touch upon the abuse of them. Their genuine tendency is to humble to dust. The language of those who are favored with them is, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Now, that I "see thee, I abhor myself. I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies. I am dust and ashes." But as there is nothing which the heart of man cannot be tempted to corrupt and pervert, so, as soon as the power attending the manifestation is a little abated, Satan begins to shoot his fiery darts of spiritual pride. "You are a peculiar favorite of heaven," whispers that old serpent; "few are so highly blessed. All your enemies are scattered; you need not be so watchful in prayer, and so strict in self-denial; you shall never fall." If the believer is not upon his guard, and quenches not these fiery darts with his shield, as fast as the enemy throws them, he is soon wounded, and pride kindles again upon him.

St. Paul himself was in danger from this quarter: "There was given him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations." Aaron and Miriam fell into this snare, when they spake against Moses, saying, "Hath the Lord indeed only spoken by Moses? Hath he not spoken by us also?" David likewise acknowledges his error in this respect: "In my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved; thou Lord, of thy goodness, hast made my hill so strong;" but my heart was lifted up, and my confidence partly carnal; therefore "thou didst turn thy face from me, and I was troubled." The way to avoid the danger is to foresee it: to look much to the lowly Jesus, and upon the first approach of a temptation to pride, to give, with double diligence, all the glory to Him that graciously bestowed all, and to take, with double care, all the shame of our sins to ourselves. St. Paul's direction in this case is excellent: "Because of unbelief some were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear."

Another genuine effect of divine manifestations is an increase of confidence in the Lord, and of activity in his service. "What holy boldness filled the souls of those worthies, who, "through faith, wrought righteousness, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens!" How did the love of Christ constrain the disciples to speak and act for God after the day of pentecost! Nothing could exceed their fortitude and diligence. Nevertheless, if the temptation to pride is yielded to, the Comforter is grieved, and carnal security, indolence of spirit, and indulgence of the flesh, insensibly prevail. The deluded professor, though shorn of his strength, like Samson, fancies himself the same. "Soul," says he, "thou hast goods laid up for many years," even for ever; though the Lord manifest himself to thee no

more, be neither uneasy nor afraid: he changes not. Sometimes the delusion grows to that height, that the farther he goes from the kingdom of God, the stronger he imagines his faith. He even speaks contemptuously of that kingdom. He calls "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," a frame, a sensible feeling, a low dispensation, beyond which he has happily got. He thanks God, he can now rest upon the bare word, without an application of it to his heart; that is to say, he can be fully satisfied with the letter without the Spirit, he can feed upon the empty husks of notions and opinions, as if they were power and life.

The end of this dreadful mistake is generally a relapse into gross sin. Witness the falls of David and Solomon; or, what is not much better, a settling in a form, without the "power of godliness," as the Laodiceans of old, and too many now, who "have a name to live, and are dead." The only way to avoid this precipice is to follow the light of the first manifestation, and look daily for new visits from Christ, till he makes his "abode with us," and we "walk in the light as he is in the light." A manifestation of the Spirit last year will no more support a soul this year, than air breathed yesterday will nourish the flame of life to-day. The sun which warmed us last week must shine again this week. Old light is dead light. A notion of old warmth is a very cold notion. We must have fresh food daily, and though we need not a new Christ, we need, perpetually, new displays of his eternal love and power. The Lord taught us this important lesson, by making the manna he gave Israel in the wilderness to disappear every day, and causing that which was not gathered fresh to "breed worms and stink." Nevertheless, as the mysterious food kept sweet in the golden pot in the ark, so does the heavenly power in Christ, to whom every true Israelite will come daily for new supplies of hidden manna, for fresh manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Thousands, by not considering this, seek the living among the dead, fancying that a living Saviour is to be found in dead experiences, and that all is well, though they "live after the flesh," and are perhaps "led captive by the devil at his will." But when their souls awake out of this dangerous dream, they will be sensible of their mistake, and frankly acknowledge, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" and that "if after they have escaped the pollution of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

Leaving these lukewarm, formal Laodicean professors to the mercy of God, I subscribe myself, sir, yours, &c.,

JOHN FLETCHER.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

LOVE-FEAST AT NORTH RUSSELL STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

The superior enjoyments possessed by those who are blessed with a sanctified heart, are visible to all those acquainted with their spirit and practice. Such persons possess a living faith; they pursue "the even tenor of their way," having "peace like a river," in the enjoyment of complete victory over Satan, the world, and the flesh. Being "cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit," they "perfect holiness in the fear of God." They are always in the path of duty, "prepared for every good word and work, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks." They are striving "to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to *know* the love of Christ, which *passeth* knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fulness of God." And then continuing to "grow in grace" *daily*, they add to their faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness charity." So continuing they are "kept by the power of God through faith unto" eternal "salvation."

This is that great salvation that the son of God suffered and died to purchase for all his people. Making it their *privilege* and *DUTY* to "secure the" first "principles and doctrines of Christ," and go on unto perfection.

This was the glorious and delightful theme on which we dwelt at the Love-feast.

The greater proportion of those who were witnesses for Christ on that blessed occasion, were either in present possession of the "unspeakable gift," or were ardently seeking it. Many testified that God *had all* the heart; that they dwelt in him, and dwelt in love. So great was the presence of God in the midst of us, and so important and glorious did the doctrine of holiness appear, that all who neglect it, must have felt sinfully deficient.

But I think had God spoken in the midst of us, and said to every heart, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" all would have responded, *Create in me a clean heart, O God.*

Now, thoughtful reader, have you the full blessing of perfect love? If you have, retain it by faith that worketh by love. If you have not, do you see, and *feel* its importance? It is the will of God, even *your* sanctification. Will you resist his will? Do you not love holiness? If you do not, how can you love God, or heaven? If then, your soul should now be required of you, you would not desire hea-

ven, because it is a holy place. Do you think you would enter there, in this state of mind? Are you not stupid on this subject? Is it not your *present duty* to love God with *all* the heart? Is it enough that you have made a profession of religion? Is it not your duty, as a professor, to be *holy*, as it was to repent, that you might be forgiven? Then why do you delay?

But you say, I desire this blessing. How much do you desire it? Are you willing to be a "whole burnt offering?" To be, and do what God requires? Are you willing now? Are you willing to receive it as God requires by faith? By faith *now*, without the deeds of the law?

Do you believe God is willing? able to do what he wills? Is he not ready to do, what he is able and willing to do? Then, why not now, as you are, "take God at his word," and be entirely saved? Do not delay; you *must* be holy to be useful, to be happy, and to be saved. For without holiness no man shall see [enjoy] the Lord.

September, 1839.

J. H.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER.

[We are permitted to copy the following from a letter to a friend in this city. It breathes the spirit of holiness, and will be interesting to our readers.]

RESPECTED FRIEND,—We have thought much of you, and others, and of our dear friends at ———, since we left. We cannot divest our minds of all concern for your spiritual welfare. We remember you often, and should joy to be with you, and behold your joy and steadfastness in the Lord. We have great peace in believing, and our inward comforts have greatly increased since we have been here. O the precious doctrine of holiness! O the preciousness of believing a full Saviour into the soul, a Saviour to take entire possession! How precious simple faith! Here we love and delight in duty—we love preaching, prayer-meetings, class-meetings, band-meetings, and have Jesus in them all. But the soul of all is, a risen, full Saviour. We can say, My Saviour, my Saviour, *now*! We pass not without, but through the form into the power—through the sign into the centre—through the means into the end. And all, all is by simple faith. Here pure love reigns:—no hardness—no shyness—no blindness to duty or privilege. How empty all without God! With God in the soul, the heavens and the earth, and all within them smile. Without God, they are only a sepulchre, a gloomy grave. While we give all to God, he returns all with a hundred fold more, back into the soul. For his sake, we resign the world, and he turns it into a Paradise. This is heaven below. O for a new and overwhelming baptism! O my friend, believe for this holy baptism now. O the fulness! I am persuaded that we do not enter into the depths of the meaning of a full baptism of the Holy Ghost. But let us try to fathom it, and if we find it impossible, and sink in the effort, it will only be into an ocean of love. There

is nothing dark to a soul truly alive to God; nothing hard or tedious; nothing unkind or uncharitable: but it is love, pure holy love. This is truth—I feel its fire—it kindles as I write. This is a baptism worthy the holy name of a baptism of the Holy Ghost. If the soul shouts, we say, Amen; if it sinks in awful, silent admiration, unable to give utterance to its emotions, we respond, Glory! Glory! How our hearts chime to the anthems of angels, “Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” By this grace, we now triumph over sin and the devil, and shall triumph over death and hell. We shout, Victory, victory, victory! Blessed be the Lord, our Lord. Whether rich or poor, we can all drink at this fountain. “See yonder is the glory, it lies but just before thee.”

July, 1839.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

LETTER FROM A CLERGYMAN.

DEAR BROTHER,—Since I experienced the pardoning love of God, which is something more than five years, I have felt the need of a deeper work of grace, as being essential to qualifying me for the performance of those high duties, which as a child of God I always felt to be resting upon me. At times, and indeed always, when the subject was introduced, whether in the sacred desk by the minister of the Lord Jesus, or in the social circle by private members of his church,—whether by reading authors upon the subject—private conversation with individuals, or in secret prayer before God in my closet,—*whenever* the subject came up before my mind, I *ever* felt the *great* need of being holy, and entirely consecrated to the Lord. The very word holiness, whenever mentioned or thought upon, has been to me as an inspiration of life eternal to the soul; and, oftentimes have I dwelt upon it with that delight, I might say ecstasy, unknown to any but him to whom experience has taught it.

Oftentimes when calling on the Lord, in view of those sacred duties upon which I was well aware I must soon enter, has my soul struggled in agony to be delivered of the remaining corruptions, which I had daily evidence existed within.

Sometimes the combat with the powers of darkness would be so severe, that, like the Psalmist, I would be led to exclaim, “I shall one day fall by the hand of my enemy.” Then again, *holiness*, like a life-boat to the drowning mariner, has appeared in view, encircled as in letters of gold, with the motto, “For this contend, and you will conquer,” carrying with it life and energy to the soul for a fresh assault, and lighting up in the breast the cheering hope that the field

would ere long be won,—the victory gained. I knew not that the Lord was so near me, saying, “Eat and live,” or I had no need to have sought for years the evidence of the blessing; it was God’s will I should have it then. If instead of bewailing my unlikeness to God, and almost despairing of ever obtaining the blessing, had I gone to the fountain opened by the soldier’s spear in the Redeemer’s side, saying, “Here, Lord, I give myself away—yield to be saved by grace;”—if instead of trying by a better life to do something which might enable me to come into the presence of God with a greater confidence, had I, covering myself with the atonement, plunged at once, with all my unlikeness to him, into the boundless abyss of his eternal love and mercy;—had I done this on my first setting out, I should have had less to say about the hours of darkness and sorrow which I spent struggling with the powers of unbelief, hardly knowing, at times, whether I was even *justified* in the sight of God.

But all my crying to God for deliverance, all my struggling with the enemy for victory, did no good, as I would not believe in this promise of God, “Whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you,” John xvi. 23. Or, “What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and *ye shall have them*,” Mark xi. 24. But the moment I would rest on these promises, all *was* peace. This promise, like an impregnable fortress, secured me from the enemy; and however loudly he might howl without the gates, however violent his assaults might be to enter again within the walls where he once held so peaceful possession; one blow from this “sword of the Spirit,” would drive him away, and cause peace inexpressible to spring up in the soul, and songs of praise to break forth from the lips, because of the great goodness of God in granting deliverance and victory through the name of Jesus.

For a few months past, I have been trying to rest on this promise, and for much of the time, a holy peace has filled my soul. When I believed it, all with me was peace; but when I disbelieved, darkness was round about my path.

I went to the camp-meeting at Eastham, pleading with God to give me a convincing evidence of full redemption. While there, I did not (with a single exception, I believe,) doubt but God had cleansed my heart; I felt peace, but wanted a greater evidence. On hearing several discourses, I solemnly made up my mind to work for God, and let him bestow such blessings as he saw fit. While laboring in prayer in the evening, for the salvation of some friends who had publicly asked the prayers of God’s people, feeling the victory gained, and a peculiar nearness of God, I looked up by faith, and he filled my soul unutterably full of glory, and of God. Such a view of God’s goodness and mercy I never had before. With the poet I could say,

" 'Twas glory in my soul,
 'Twas glory all around."

My soul now lives in a clear atmosphere and an unclouded sky, viewing the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of everlasting love. I imagine some one says, "Such should be my enjoyments, could I have a like evidence." But remember this, my brother, the promise is the word of God, "Believe ye receive, and ye shall have." This is a rock firm as the eternal throne, and on it the Christian is safe. If God gives ecstasies of joy, praise him for it; but be sure to rest on a firmer foundation than even this, God's word, which *cannot fail*.

MAHAN ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Rev. Mr. Mahan, President of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, has written a very able defence of the doctrine of Bible holiness, which is concluded with an account of his own experience. After having been several years a minister of the gospel, his mind was directed especially to this great and glorious doctrine. The result follows as written by himself. I set my heart, (says he,) by prayer and supplication to God, to find the light after which I had been so long seeking.

In this state I visited one of my associates in the Institution, and disclosed to him the burden which had weighed down my mind for so many years. I asked him, if he could tell me the secret of the piety of Paul, and tell me the reason of the strange contrast between the apostle's experience and my own. In laboring for the salvation of men, I observed, that my feelings often remained unmoved and unaffected, while Paul was constantly "*constrained*" by the love of Christ. Our conversation then turned upon the passage "The love of Christ constraineth us," &c. While thus employed, my heart leaped up in ecstasy indescribable, with the exclamation, "I have found it." I have now, by the grace of God discovered the secret after which I have been searching these many years. I understood the secret of the piety of Paul, and knew how to attain to that blissful state myself. Paul's piety all arose from one source exclusively, a sympathy with the heart of Christ in his love for lost man. To attain to that state myself, I had only to acquaint myself with the love of Christ, and yield my whole being up to its sweet control.

Immediately after this, I came before the church and disclosed to them what I then saw to be the grand defect in my ministry. 1. Christ had been but as one chapter in my system of theology, when he should have been the sun and centre of the system. 2. When I thought of my guilt and need of justification, I had looked to Christ exclusively, as I ought to have done. For sanctification, on the other hand, to overcome the "world, the flesh, and the devil," I had depended mainly upon my own resolutions. Here was the grand mistake, and the source of all my bondage under sin. I ought to have looked to Christ for sanctification as much as for justification, and for the same reason. The great object of my being

now was, to know Christ, and in knowing him to be changed into his image. Here was the "victory which overcometh the world." Here was the "death of the body of sin." Here was "redemption from all iniquity," into the "glorious liberty of the children of God." At this time, the appropriate office of the Holy Spirit presented itself to my mind with a distinctness and interest never understood nor felt before. To know Christ was the life of the soul. To "take of the things of Christ and show them unto us," to open our hearts to understand the Scriptures, to strengthen us with might in the inner man, that we might comprehend the "breadth and depth, and length and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and thus be "filled with all the fulness of God," is the appropriate office of the Spirit. The highway of holiness was now for the first time rendered perfectly distinct to my mind. The discovery of it was to my mind as "life from the dead." The disclosure of this path had the same effect upon others, who had been, like myself, "*weary, tost with tempest, and not comforted.*" As my supreme attention was thus fixed upon Christ, as it became the great object of my being to know him, and be transformed into his likeness, and as I was perpetually seeking that divine illumination by which I might apprehend him, an era occurred in my experience, which I have no doubt will ever be one of the most memorable in my entire past existence. In a moment of deep and solemn thought, the veil seemed to be lifted, and I had a vision of the infinite glory and love of Christ, as manifested in the mysteries of the redemption. I will not attempt to describe the effect of that vision upon my mind. All that I would say is, that in view of it, my heart melted and flowed out like water. The heart of stone was taken away, and a heart of love and tenderness assumed its place. From that time I have desired to "know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified." I have literally "esteemed all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," and the knowledge of Christ has been eternal life begun in my heart.

Now when the Lord Jesus Christ was thus held up among us by myself and others, a brother in the ministry arose in one of our meetings and remarked, that there was one question to which he desired that a definite answer might be given. It is this, "When we look to Christ for sanctification, what degree of sanctification may we expect from him? May we look to him to be sanctified wholly, or not?" I do not recollect that I was ever so shocked and confounded at any question before or since. I felt, for the moment, that the work of Christ among us would be marred, and the mass of minds around us rush into Perfectionism. Still the question was before us; and to it we were bound, as pupils of the Holy Spirit, to give a Scriptural answer. We did not attempt to give a definite answer to it during that time. With that question before us, brother Finney and myself came to New York, and spent most of the winter together, in prayer and the study of the Bible. The great inquiry with us was, what degree of holiness may we ourselves expect from Christ, when we exercise faith in him, and in what light shall we present him to others, as a Saviour from sin. We looked, for example, at such passages as this, passages of which the Bible is full, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." We looked at such passages, I say, and asked ourselves this question, Suppose an honest inquirer after holiness, comes to us, and asks of us, What degree of holiness is here promised to the believer? May I ex-

pect, in view of this prayer and promise, that God will sanctify me wholly, and preserve me in that state, till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? What answer shall we give him? Shall we tell him that merely *partial* and not perfect holiness is here promised, and that the former and not the latter he is here authorized to expect? After looking prayerfully at the testimony of Scripture in respect to the provisions and promises of divine grace, we were constrained to admit, that but one answer to the above question could be given from the Bible; and the greatest wonder with me is, that I have been so long a "master of Israel, and have never before known these things." Since that time we have never ceased to proclaim the redemption of Christ as a full redemption. Nor do we expect to cease proclaiming it as a full and finished redemption, till Christ shall call us home. For myself, I am willing to proclaim it to the world, that I now look to the very God of peace to sanctify me wholly, and preserve my whole spirit, and soul, and body, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I put up this prayer with the expectation that the very things prayed for will be granted. Reader, is that confidence misplaced? In expecting that blessing, am I leaning upon a broken reed, or upon the broad promise of God?

There is one circumstance connected with my recent experience, to which I desire to turn the special attention of the reader. I would here say, that I have forever given up all idea of resisting temptation, subduing any lust, appetite or propensity, or of acceptably performing any service for Christ, by the mere force of my own resolutions. If my propensities which lead to sin, are crucified, I know that it must be done by an indwelling Christ. If I overcome the world, this is to be the victory, "even our faith." If the great enemy is to be overcome, it is to be done "by the blood of the Lamb."

Believing, as I now do, that the Lord Jesus Christ has provided special grace for the entire sanctification of every individual, for the subjection of all his propensities, for a perfect victory over every temptation and incentive to sin, and for rendering us, in every sphere and condition in life, all that he requires us to be; the first inquiry with me is, In what particular respects do I need the grace of Christ? What is there, for example, in my temper, that needs correcting? Wherein am I in bondage to appetite, or to any of my propensities? What are the particular responsibilities, temptations, &c., incident to each particular sphere and condition in life, in which the providence of God has called me to act? What is the temper that I ought, then, to manifest, so that I may every where, and under all circumstances, reflect the image of Christ?

Thus having discovered my special necessity, in any one of the particulars above referred to, my next object is, to take some promise applicable to the particular exigency before me, and go directly to Christ for the supply of that particular necessity. By having the eye of faith perpetually fixed upon Christ in this manner, by always looking to him for special grace in every special exigency, yes, for "grace to help in every time of need," how easy it is to realize, in our own blessed experience, the truth of all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of divine grace. How easy it is to have the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, "keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "Our peace is then as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea." The mind seems to be borne upward and onward, as upon an ocean of light, peace, and blessedness, which knows no bounds.

"O glorious change! 'tis all of grace,
By bleeding love bestowed
On outcasts of our fallen race,
To bring them home to God;
Infinite grace to vileness given,
The sons of earth made heirs of heaven."

And now, reader, "My heart's desire and prayer to God" for you, is, that you may know this full redemption. If you will cease from all efforts of your own, and bring your sins, and sorrows, and cares, and propensities which lead into sin, to Christ, and cast them all upon him; if with implicit faith, you will hang your whole being upon him, and make it the great object of life to know him, for the purpose of receiving and reflecting his image, you will find that all the "exceeding great and precious promises" of his word, are, in your own blissful experience, a living reality. The waters that Christ shall give you, "shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life." You shall have a perpetual and joyful victory over the "world, the flesh, and the devil." Every where, and under all circumstances, your peace in Christ shall be as a "river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." "O taste and see that the Lord is good." "There is no want to them that fear him." And, reader, when your cup is once filled with the love of Christ, you will then say with truth, "The half has not been told me." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

LETTERS BY MR. WESLEY.

TO MISS FURLEY.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, June 14, 1757.

You have reason to praise God for what he has done, and to expect all that he has promised. Indeed, if it were required that you should work this in yourself, your impotence might be a bar to your expectations; and so might your unworthiness, if God required any merit of yours, in order to his working in you. But what impotence in you can be a bar to the almighty power of God? And what unworthiness can hinder the free love of God? his love in and through Christ Jesus? So that all the promises lie fair before you. The land flowing with milk and honey, the Canaan of his perfect love, is open. Believe, and enter in!

It is an observation of one of the ancients, that it is far easier not to desire praise than not to be pleased with it. A bare conviction that it is, generally speaking, deadly poison, may prevent our desiring it; but nothing less than humble love filling the heart, will prevent our being pleased with it; for the sense of honor is as natural to man as the sense of tasting or feeling. But when that which is spiritual is fully come, this which is corrupt naturally shall be done away.

Whatever enemies you have, it is enough that you have a Friend who is mightier than them all. O let him reign in your heart alone!

TO MISS HARDY.

December 26, 1761.

DEAR SISTER,—The path of controversy is a rough path. But it seems smother, while I am walking with you: so that I could follow you through all its windings; only my time will not permit.

The plain fact is this: I know many who love God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. He is their one desire, their one delight, and they are continually happy in him. They love their neighbor as themselves. They feel as sincere, fervent, constant a desire for the happiness of every man, good or bad, friend or enemy, as for their own. They “rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.” Their souls are continually streaming up to God in holy joy, prayer, and praise. This is plain, sound, Scriptural experience: and of this we have more and more living witnesses.

But these souls dwell in a shattered, corruptible body, and are so pressed down thereby that they cannot exert their love as they would, by always thinking, speaking, and acting precisely right. For want of better bodily organs, they sometimes inevitably think, speak, or act wrong. Yet I think they need the advocacy of Christ, even for these involuntary defects; although they do not imply a defect of love, but of understanding. However that be, I cannot doubt the fact. They are all love; yet they cannot walk as they desire. “But are they all love, while they grieve the Holy Spirit?” No, surely; they are then fallen from their steadfastness; and this they may do even after they are sealed. So that, even to such, strong cautions are needful. After the heart is cleansed from pride, anger, and desire, it may suffer them to re-enter: therefore, I have long thought some expressions in the hymns are abundantly too strong; as I cannot perceive any state mentioned in Scripture from which we may not (in a measure, at least,) fall.

Persons who talked of being emptied before they were filled, were, for sometime, a great stumbling-block to me, too; but I have since considered it thus: the great point in question is, Can we be saved from all sin, or not? Now it may please God to act in that uncommon manner, purposely to clear this point; to satisfy those persons that they are saved from all sin, before he goes on in his work.

Forgive me, dear Miss Hardy, that I do but just touch upon the heads of your letter. Indeed, this defect does not spring from the want of love, but only for want of time. I should not wonder if your soul was one of the next that was filled with pure love. Receive it freely, thou poor bruised reed! It is able to make thee stand.